

Amherst Village Strategic Plan – Steering and Outreach Committee Meeting

MINUTES

Wednesday, March 11, 2015 6:30 – 8:30 pm
Community Room – SAU 39 – Brick School

Attendees: Amily Moore, Amy LaPointe, Bruce Berry, Camille Pattison, Chris Janson, Colleen Mailloux, Elizabeth Larson, Jamie Ramsay, Ken Miller, Marie Grella, Mark Reams, Mike Akillian, Steve Yurish, Al Patnaude, Will Ludt, Craig Fraley, Mark Connors

Upcoming Meetings: April 8, 2015 at 6:30 – 8:30 pm; (2nd Wednesday of the month)
Community Room – SAU 39 – Brick School

Topic	Notes
<p>Outreach Committee Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Report by committee members on their recent outreach events; <i>School Board</i>Are there any future events? House Meeting – Mike Akillian	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Meeting notes from: School Board - Mike Akillian and Chris Janson: Need to identify more things to do in the Village including more mixed use/commercial. The ability to safely walk to school could be improved. The Board felt that more kids are driven to school than ride the bus. There are now less buses traveling to Clark School. Noted that people don't use the Foundry Street sidewalks due to puddles and there are parking issues at the Brick School. Belief that if there were more sidewalks more kids would walk to school. People thought a European traffic model wouldn't work for political reasons and it would be difficult to address the blind spots. Would like a new playground or park. Bring the post office back or bring a senior center. If the schools have extra space could a building swap occur? Don't notice the utility lines. A fall festival and additional summer concerts and events could bring different age groups to the center. Ideally maintain the quaint nature, add some mixed use, bring more activity, keep having conversations like this and consider a road race and an art center/museum.Future Horace Greeley Rd. House Meeting with Mike Akillian and Chris Janson on March 17
<p>Working Group Reports (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recreation The group looked at the calendar of events and decided the focus should not be on creating more events but rather on strengthening the events that are already in place. Need to organize the events better from a liability standpoint. Increase passive recreation events such as Bocci Ball tournaments at the Middle Street Park. Putnam Park in Peterborough is a great example with table size boulders and Adirondack chairs. Considering adding a fun run before the concerts on the common and trying to diversify the band performances. Will be moving the skating rink to the Middle School. Will also speak to the Amherst Land Trust, about a proposal at Courthouse and Boston post road for a playground and community garden.

<p>Working Group Reports (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic Character <p>Jamie Ramsey noted that they haven't met yet but they will address this at their next meeting. They will be working on updating their overview brochure and making sure that new property owners get the brochure. Also need to consider how to streamline the operational process of the HDC. Mike will attend the HDC meeting on 3/19/15 to help pass along the information to the new designee, as Jamie will be stepping down due to work demands. Al suggested passing along info from the Department of Interior on historic districts and old homes specifically on maintaining old homes.</p> <p>Colleen suggested taking up the offer from the NH Preservation Alliance on reviewing new ordinances and town processes. Have any reviews been done of other successful historic districts? Need to spread the information via realtors as well. Could Tracy distribute the information via the Chamber of Commerce? The group can also address items that need to be considered in the future but can't be addressed now.</p>
<p>Working Group Reports (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting and Utilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting and Utilities <p>Bruce photographed the library, church and Brick School at night to see what they look like at night and compared them to buildings that are illuminated. Still discussing when to best try out a lighting event.</p> <p>Bruce has identified all of the junction boxes and transformers to see what and where they would be located on the ground in the event that overhead wires are located underground. It is easy to damage them in the snow in the winter. Also need to identify the challenges with underground utilities. The committee will determine the best place to try this out and determine a ballpark cost.</p> <p>Should consider different lighting options rather than the existing large telephone poles. Also look at Concord, MA as an example.</p>
<p>Working Group Reports (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic and Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic and Safety <p>The group looked at the survey and outreach data compiled so far. Biking, traffic and signage problems are exacerbated by the closed bridge. Need to look at reducing traffic to limit noise. They determined that the 85 percentile speed is 34 miles per hour and considered how to reduce this. They are identifying ways to work with parents and get more kids to ride the bus and reduce drop offs and parking obstructions. A follow up survey in a year could help determine if people's perceptions about traffic and speed have changed.</p> <p>Need to continue efforts to get grant funding for sidewalks and advocate for sidewalks to be included in future budgets. Bike paths may be best located outside of the village with a focus on painting crosswalks or textural changes in the village. Some additional considerations include a through-trucking ban in the village, a noise ordinance, designating a school zone, an increased police presence in the village, and an educational initiative on traffic, increased cooperation amongst the residents, site specific recommendations and speed display signs. General consensus that stop signs are effective; however there are about 50 stop signs and about 15 redundant signs in the village.</p>

<p>Working Group Reports (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Development <p>There was a split among group members between the desire to increase economic development or leave as is. Need to keep the village looking the same, but maybe allow some increase in business while being selective about the types of permitted businesses. Would need to establish a conditional use permit and business village design guidelines. There are concerns about traffic and parking and would require some education about available parking locations. Should also identify other commercial sites within a one mile area and research other villages that have increased economic development and see what the outcomes were?</p> <p>Mike suggested looking at a number of development options, from low to high development and let town comment on the options. There is currently an 18 month lapse on businesses, and then they return to residential uses.</p>
<p>Working Group Framework and Project Schedule – Mike</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the schedule for the remaining tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final report/results will be presented to the BOS at the June 8th, 2015 meeting. Consensus not to have a Saturday morning meeting in April to share results from the working groups. Need to determine what forum is best for town input on the recommendations including: open house; display in the library / town hall; just one presentation and film it on TV; input via an electronic mechanism; or town website. Public input needs to happen in early May in order to incorporate input and have a final product for the June 8 BOS meeting. At the April meeting – must determine mode of public input and set a date for the May event. Working groups must get the bulk of their work completed by the April 8th meeting. Need to include benefit / cost analysis
<p>Mapping and Presentation Needs – Camille Pattison, NRPC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review draft outreach findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Going forward each working group needs to identify any mapping or imagery that they would like to share at the input event in May or for the BOS presentation. These requests need to be given to Camille by the April 8th meeting.
<p>Follow Up Items</p>	
<p>All Committee Members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continue working with your subcommittee to complete the majority of your efforts by April; including identifying issues and recommendations. Each subcommittee needs to use the Working Group Framework to ensure everyone is providing the same information to NRPC for compilation. 	